

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8737

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 17, 1973

FOL SENT ACTION SAIGON MAY 17 AND RPTD FOR YOUR INFO QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0327

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 17, 1973

1. SUMMARY: HEAVY FIGHTING IN CHUONG THIEN HIGHLIGHTED THE DELTA'S MILITARY ACTIVITY MAY 16. VC/ NVA FORCES ARE ON THE MOVE NEAR THE HONG NGU BORDER AREA. AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST FAILS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO VISIT VC TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) VIOLENCE IN MR IV CONTINUED TO INCREASE MAY 16 WITH 58 COMMUNIST- INITIATED INCIDENTS REPORTED, COMPARED TO 48 THE PREVIOUS DAY. ONCE AGAIN, MUCH OF THE FIGHTING WAS CONCENTRATED IN CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE, WHICH REPORTED 35 INCIDENTS. AMONG THE DELTA'S INCIDENTS WERE TWO GROUND ASSAULTS, 39 ATTACKS BY FIRE, 16 HARASSMENTS, AND A TERRORIST ACT. FRIENDLY LOSSES
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TOTALED 17 KILLED.-78 WOUNDED AND TWO MISSING. THE VC/ NVA LOST 42 DEAD, AND TWO SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS WERE DETAINED. (B) GROUND FIRE MAY 16 SEVERELY DAMAGED A 21 ST ARVN DIVISION HELICOPTER NEAR THE CHUONG THIEN VILLAGE OF HOA LUU WHERE AN RF COMPANY FELL INTO A VC AMBUSH MAY - (CAN THO 0316). THE PILOT MANAGED TO MAKE IT BACK TO WITHIN A FEW HUNDRED YARDS OF VI THANH BEFORE CRASHING INTO A RICE FIELD, SEVERELY INJURING THE SEVEN MEN ABOARD. AN ICCS TEAM WAS ON THE SCENE, INVESTIGATING THE EARLIER ROCKETING OF VI THANH (CAN THO 0322). CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN MEMBERS WANTED TO INSPECT THE BULLET- POKED HELICOPTER CARCASS BUT THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS REFUSED.

3. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY: (A) IN THE SENSITIVE HONG NGU- CAMBODIAN BORDER AREA, NVA FORCES ARE ON THE MOVE. NVA 5 TH DIVISION FORCES, PREVIOUSLY ESTIMATED (CAN THO 0251) READYING FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN GVN MR III, SEEM NOW TO BE MOVING TO THE CAMBODIAN SIDE OF THE HONG NGU BORDER. THE 5 TH' S E-2 REGIMENT, A PARTICIPANT IN THE APRIL HONG NGU CAMPAIGN, REMAINS IN PLACE AS NOTED IN CAN THO' S 0306 BUT MAY HAVE DISPATCHED SEVERAL BATTALIONS FOR MEKONG RIVER INTERDICTION. THE E-1 IS SWINGING OVER TO JOIN THE E-2. THE E-3 CONTINUES TO PRESS ITS WITHDRAWAL TO CAMBODIA UP THE CAI CAI CANAL SYSTEM. ARVN 7 TH DIVISION OPERATIONS HAVE SLOWED THE REGIMENT' S MOVE. OF THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE APRIL HONG NGU FIGHT, THE NVA 9- B DIVISION' S E-272 REGIMENT MAY HAVE WITHDRAWN FOUR KILOMETERS SOUTH OF KOMPONG TRABEK. THE 9- B' S E-207 IS STILL IN THE HONG NGU AREA AND COULD BE WAITING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE E-3 BEFORE REJOINING OTHER 9- B FORCES. SUBSTANTIAL ARTILLERY UNITS-- MORTAR AND ROCKETS-- REMAIN ABOVE THE BORDER AND SOME WILL PROBABLY BE TARGETED AGAINST THE CONVOY ROUTE. G-2 MR IV BELIEVES SOME MORTARS REMAIN IN VIET NAM AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HARASSING THE ARVN 9 TH DIVISION' S OUTPOSTS ABOVE HONG NGU.

(B) THE PRG' S ACCOUNT OF THE APRIL HONG NGU CAMPAIGN DIFFERS SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THAT OF THE GVN. LIBERATION RADIO MAY 8 REPORTED: " ACCORDING TO THE PEOPLE' S LIBERATION ARMY, FROM APRIL 26 TO 29, TWO BATTALIONS OF THE 9 TH INFANTRY DIVISION, A SCOUT COMPANY AND AN ARMOR SQUADRON OF THE SAIGON ARMY CONDUCTED NIBBLING
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ATTACKS ON THUONG LAC AND THUONG THOI HAU VILLAGES, HONG NGU DISTRICT, KIEN PHONG PROVINCE, IN THE REGION UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PRG. SAIGON TROOPS EVERY DAY FIRED 500 ARTILLERY ROUNDS AND SAIGON AIRCRAFT FLEW MANY SORTIES TO BOMB AND STRAFE THE AREA. AFTER WARNING THE RAIDERS AGAINST CONTINUING THE RAID, THE LOCAL PATRIOTIC FORCES ENERGETICALLY FOUGHT BACK, INFLECTING HEAVY LOSSES ON ONE

BATTALION AND DAMAGING FOUG M-113 S."
(C) BY "LOCAL PATRIOTIC FORCES" WE ASSUME LIBERATION
RADIO REFERS TO THE FOUR NVA REGIMENTS COMMITTED TO THE
CAMPAIGN. WINSER UNQUOTEWHITEHOUSE

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